



JACK DOYLE

MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

For Immediate Release:

Wednesday, May 30, 2001

DOYLE ANNOUNCES 'MCSEMI' ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Monroe County Executive Jack Doyle today announced a new program to assist local small businesses improve environmental management efforts. The Monroe County Strategic Environmental Management Initiative (MCSEMI) is aimed at helping small employers in the community comply with important internationally established environmental management systems (EMS) and standards. The MCSEMI is the product of a partnership including Monroe County, Rochester Institute of Technology and The IMC.

The ISO-14000 series of international standards have been developed for incorporating environmental aspects into manufacturing operations and product standards by the International Organization for Standardization. In September 1996, the international committee finalized the ISO 14001 standards for environmental management systems and complying with these standards is a critical factor for local employers to remain competitive in the global marketplace.

"Many larger companies are now requiring smaller suppliers to comply with ISO 14001 environmental guidelines," said Doyle. "While large companies have the resources to achieve ISO 14001 designations it can be difficult for smaller companies to achieve this same goal. As this designation becomes a critical factor in obtaining contracts, it is important to assist our smaller employers, not only to preserve and expand our jobs base, but also to promote safe environmental practices in the workplace."

The MCSEMI initiative will partner Monroe County with the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and the Industrial Management Council (IMC) and is funded with a \$75,000 grant from the New York State Department of Economic Development.

As a pilot, the partnership will initially work with one local employer, Firth Rixson, Inc, to develop a curriculum. Once this curriculum is completed, six additional companies will receive assistance under the MCSEMI pilot program during its first year. With the curriculum in place, the program will be expanded to

-- more --

assist more companies in the future and an economical fee system will be established.

Most small and medium sized businesses already recognize the benefits of strong strategic environmental management, however, they are often overwhelmed with the complexity and cost of the implementation process. MCSEMI is intended to assist these local employers by providing appropriate training and guidance to implement strategic environmental management systems within their organizations.

The benefits of MCSEMI to the community will be seen in better environmental compliance by local employers and, in turn, the employers themselves will be more competitive.

As trade and business becomes more global, the International Organization for Standardization's ISO 14001 designation becomes important for all business sectors. Implementation of internationally recognized strategic environmental management systems is an important component in the ISO 14001 standard. In response to this movement, large manufacturers like General Motors, Ford, Kodak and Xerox have set requirements, preferences or incentives favoring those suppliers with an ISO 14001 EMS in place.

Even state and federal regulatory agencies are rewarding companies with ISO 14001-style EMS's. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) waives certain reporting requirements and expedites permit reviews for companies that implement acceptable environmental management systems. Both the EPA and New York State also waive punitive fines for companies with an EMS that find environmental violations as part of an environmental self-audit.

From an economic development and profit perspective, strategic environmental management measures offer all companies an opportunity to identify and reduce pollution, increase production efficiency and, subsequently, reduce costs associated with environmental compliance and liability.

"Government's role is often seen as the enforcer, where we come in after the fact and assess fines or other punishment for environmental non-compliance issues," said Doyle. "Today, we are kicking-off a proactive new program that will work with local employers to make them more environmentally friendly and more competitive. This initiative shows that Monroe County remains a leader in promoting our environment and in finding creative ways to protect and expand local jobs."

###

For further information, call:
Communications and Special Events, 428-2380
See us on the Web at www.co.monroe.ny.us